

# JAMES AND SARAH FERGUSON McDONALD

James McDonald was born June 1, 1802, in Crawfordfurn, County Down, Ireland, son of Moses McDonald and Mary Glass. He married Sarah Ferguson in Ireland about 1825 or 1826. She was born October 13, 1803, in Lisburn, Ireland, daughter of Samuel and Nancy Alderice Ferguson. They were the parents of 10 children: Jane, born 1826; John, born 1828, who died in infancy; Eliza, born 1830; John, born 1832; William, born



1834; Mary, born 1836; David, born 1836, who died in infancy; Hyrum, born 1839, dying in infancy; Robert, born 1840, and Joseph, born 1842, all born in Ireland, and Hyrum, born 1846 at Nauvoo, Illinois, and who died in infancy.

The McDonalds first heard the missionaries of the LDS Church in Belfast, Ireland, in 1841, and invited them to hold meetings in their home. They were one of the first five families to be baptized. Immediately they desired to come to Zion, but were poor and had no means. Through their industriousness they saved enough for the trip and in 1843 sailed from Liverpool, England, with a company of 250 saints. The boat was small and crowded. Two days after they left, the wind died down and they could not move for 10 days. Then a storm struck which lasted three days and nights, damaging the ship and leaving everyone seasick and fearing for their lives. Finally the storm blew off their course and they made the crossing in six weeks to New Orleans. There they boarded the Prophet Joseph Smith's steamboat, "Maid of Iowa," and went up the Mississippi to Nauvoo, a 10-day trip. Hyrum Smith met them and offered an old home to them in which to live. They had 75 cents remaining when they arrived, which was spent on an ax. The old home had no doors or windows, but they repaired it and made it livable. Then the ague struck and they suffered with it nine months, finally being able to seek work. James was employed with a farmer, who paid in produce, and they earned two cows, two wagons, vegetables, flour and cornmeal to last through the winter. They remained in Nauvoo two and one-half years before the mob drove them out. They went to Boneparte, Iowa, living there three years in preparing to move west. In 1849 they

lived at Kanesville, near Council Bluffs, and in the spring of 1850 began their journey to Utah with three yoke of oxen, two yoke of cows and a pony, plus their wagon and provisions. Cholera broke out when they reached the Platte River and many died. James helped dig a grave for a man at 10 a.m. and before many hours he had been afflicted himself and died before dark that night. The next morning his body was wrapped in a quilt and buried at the second crossing of the Platte River on June 18, 1850. Sarah was grief-stricken, but Jane, the eldest child, took up her father's whip and the journey continued. The oldest sons helped procure meat and food along the way. They arrived in Utah with Company J in September, 1850, and spent six weeks in Salt Lake, then moving to Mountainville (now Alpine), where they spent the winter and moved on to Springville in March, 1851. Sarah's children worked to support their mother, but gradually married or moved away for work. She served as the first Relief Society president in Springville, and in 1862 moved with her sons, John, William and Joseph, and daughters, Jane and Mary, to Heber, where they all took up land, built homes and reared their families. The boys built a home for their mother across from her daughter, Jane Clyde. She died in Heber in 1883 at the age of 78.